

SOURCE SELECTION STATEMENT

FOR

Glenn Pressure Systems Certification Contract (GPSC)

Background

The NASA Glenn Research Center has an ongoing need for Pressure Systems Certification. The anticipated effort would include certification of the pressure vessels and pressure systems; repair of pressure vessels and pressure systems, and the operation, maintenance, and engineering of cryogenic systems. The systems and equipment to be certified and maintained under are located in various buildings at both Lewis Field and Plum Brook Station.

This is a follow-on to contract to NNC04CB45C for similar work activity. It is anticipated that single cost-plus-fixed-fee contract will be awarded as the result of this solicitation. The basic period of performance will be for two (2) years, with three (3) one-year options. The solicitation was issued as a small business set-aside.

On April 17, 2009, the Request for Proposal (RFP) NNC09ZF002R was issued. One amendment to the RFP was also issued. Past Performance Questionnaires were required to be submitted by May 1, 2009. The remainder of the proposal information was required to be submitted by June 1, 2009. The following firms submitted a proposal:

AP Solutions, Inc. (AP)
Mainthia Technologies, Inc. (MTI)

Immediately upon receipt, both proposals were reviewed to determine if they were acceptable for a detailed evaluation. Both proposals were deemed to be acceptable and included in the overall evaluation.

Evaluation Procedure

The proposals were evaluated in accordance with Section "M" of the solicitation, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 15.3, and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.3. A Source Evaluation Committee (SEC) had previously been appointed to evaluate the proposals. The SEC was supported by several non-voting technical experts to evaluate discrete areas of the proposals. Experts were appointed in the areas of Safety and Health, Sample Tasks and Cost Analysis.

The RFP include three evaluation factors: Technical Capability, Past Performance and Experience, and Cost. Both Technical Capability and Past Performance and Experience would receive adjectival ratings. Cost would not receive a rating but stand on its own merits.

Technical Capability was further divided into the following subfactors:

Technical Capability Subfactors

Subfactor 1 – Sample Tasks

Subfactor 2 – Management Approach

Subfactor 3 – Key Personnel and Staffing Plan

Subfactor 4 – Phase-in Plan

Subfactor 5 – Safety and Health

Within Technical Capability, the relative importance of subfactors were: Sample Tasks, Management Approach, Key Personnel and Staffing Plan and Safety and Health are approximately equal in importance and significantly more important than the Phase-in Plan. Additionally, the evaluation provided for the Technical Capability subfactors to be consolidated into a single summary Technical Capability rating.

The RFP provided for a Technical Capability adjectival rating of: *excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor*.

Past Performance was evaluated and rated using the following scale: very high level of confidence, high level of confidence, moderate level of confidence, low level of confidence, very low level of confidence, neutral.

Cost was not given an adjectival rating but was evaluated for omissions and compared with other offerors. The Government reserved the right to perform a probable cost analysis based on unrealistic, unsupported, or omitted cost information.

The relative importance of the evaluation factors is: (1) Technical Capability and Past Performance, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost; and (2) as individual factors, Technical Capability is more important than Past Performance which is more important than Cost.

SEC voting members reviewed each proposal in its entirety. The SEC as a group considered each member's individual findings and then discussed consensus findings for each offeror. Consensus findings and corresponding ratings were reached for each Technical Capability sub-factor. Sub-factor ratings were then consolidated into a single summary Technical Capability rating.

Consensus findings and corresponding rating were also reached for Past Performance.

A detailed description of the SEC's findings is provided below.

Findings

AP Solutions, Inc.

Overall, ***Technical Capability*** was rated "***good***". The individual subfactors were rated as indicated below:

Sample Tasks was rated "good". One significant strength was identified within the response to Sample Task 2, the Offeror demonstrated comprehensive and exceptional understanding of ASME Section VIII, Div 2 code requirements as well as proficiency in complex technical skills including categorization of stresses and allowable limits, and fatigue life assessment using shakedown and redistribution of stresses. The Offeror also demonstrated a complete and practical understanding of the finite element analysis process by performing global and local stress analysis. Acquiring this caliber of analytical capability would enable recertification of legacy components via an analytical process in lieu of field replacement or repair. Corresponding benefits include the potential to avoid (or defer) costly field repairs and associated downtime.

No strengths were identified.

No significant weaknesses were identified.

Two weaknesses were identified. Within the response to Sample Task #1, the Offeror failed to correctly identify the correct fluid service category, Within Sample Task # 3, a weakness was identified in the Offeror's failure to provide certain engineering calculations, design specifics, or associated capacities.

Because the data was missing from the proposal, the offeror's understanding of what parameters affect pressure relief device sizing could not be determined.

Management Approach was rated as "good". One significant strength was identified in the Offeror's proposed use of "isite", a third party software which would enable the Government to have real time access to the contractor's management information, thus allowing the COTR to more accurately monitor contractor activities.

One strength was identified in the Offeror's relationship with the corporate office and the minimal corporate hierarchy.

One significant weakness was identified in the proposal's lack of response to the Impaired Objectivity Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) that was identified by the Government in section H.12 of the solicitation. As a result, the Government could not evaluate whether or the Offeror fully understood the major areas of potential conflict of interest.

One weakness was identified in the proposal's inability to demonstrate sufficient corporate technical resources (reach-back).

The Key Personnel and Staffing Plan was rated as "good". No significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses or weaknesses were identified. It was determined that the Offeror's proposal met the requirements of this subfactor.

The Phase In Plan was rated as "good". No significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses or weaknesses were identified. It was determined that the Offeror's proposal met the requirements of this subfactor.

Safety and Health was rated as "good". No significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses or weaknesses were identified. It was determined that the Offeror's proposal met the requirements of this subfactor.

Past Performance and Relevant Experience was rated as "*moderate level of confidence*".

No significant strengths were identified. Two strengths were identified in the Offeror's demonstrated excellent performance on its referenced contracts (however it was noted that the work described in those referenced contracts is not directly related to the RFP requirements). The other strength was identified in the Offeror's major teaming partner/subcontractor Gilcrest Electric and Supply Co. which has relevant experience with cryogenic systems and excellent, prior performance as the prime contractor on the previous Maintenance, Operations, Recertification, Engineering (MORE) contract, which was similar in size, scope and complexity to the RFP requirements.

No significant weaknesses were identified.

One weakness was identified in the proposal's lack of inclusion of OSHA 300 forms; as a result, the Government could not evaluate the Offeror's previous safety record.

One neutral finding was identified based on the Offeror's previous contract experience having minimal involvement with pressure systems certification and cryogenic systems operations, maintenance and engineering.

Cost/Price. AP was the higher of the two offerors, but lower than the Government estimate. The price was less than 1 percent higher than MTI's price. No probable cost adjustments were identified. The Government had high confidence that the effort could be performed at the proposed price.

Mainthia Technologies, Inc.

Technical Capability was rated "good". Under the individual subfactors:

Sample Tasks was rated "good". No significant strengths or strengths were identified.

One weakness was identified. Within the response to Sample Task 1, the Offeror did not provide information on how repairs will be performed using subcontractors. Since repairs are a significant portion of the contract, the Offeror's approach in this Sample Task was considered important in evaluating its ability to perform the repairs and understanding of the possible impact to contract costs that repairs can represent.

Management Approach was rated as "good". No significant strengths were identified.

Two strengths were identified: One in the Offeror's relationship with the corporate office and the minimal corporate hierarchy and the second in the contractor control and span of autonomy in which the proposal demonstrated clearly defined and demonstrated systematic approach to communication with the Government, the span of autonomy of the program manager and the clearly delineated lines of authority and responsibility. One weakness was identified in the proposal's inability to demonstrate sufficient corporate technical resources (reach-back).

The Key Personnel and Staffing Plan was rated as "very good". One significant strength was identified: The proposed Program Manager was the original PM for the CROME contract. As a result, he has experience with the same type of work to be conducted under the GSPC contract. He also has experience managing other large NASA contracts at other NASA Centers. With an experienced PM, the potential for a high level of contract performance is significantly increased.

No strengths, significant weaknesses, or weaknesses were identified

The Phase In Plan was rated as "good". No significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses or weaknesses were identified. It was determined that the Offeror's proposal met the requirements of this subfactor.

Safety and Health was rated as "good". No significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses or weaknesses were identified. It was determined that the Offeror's proposal met the requirements of this subfactor.

Past Performance and Relevant Experience was rated as "very high level of confidence".

Two significant strengths were identified: The first was for the Offeror's demonstrated excellent technical performance with directly relevant experience in pressure vessel recertification and cryogenic support. This includes serving as the incumbent on the current Center CPS Recertification, Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering (CROME) contract. The fact that these reference contracts are similar in size and scope increases the likelihood of successful contractor performance.

Also, MTI received a significant strength for its contract management experience, as a prime contractor, that is directly applicable to the scope of work to be performed under the GSPC contract. This fact, coupled with

a proposed contract manager experience in managing fluctuating workloads, will enhance contract performance.

Cost/Price. MTI's proposed price was the lower of the two offerors and lower than the Government's estimate. A slight probable cost adjustment was made to reflect vehicle lease costs. After the probable cost adjustment, the probable costs were still lower than the other offeror. The Government had high confidence that the effort could be performed at the adjusted price.

Selection Decision

On July 27, 2009, a presentation was made to the SSA which detailed the findings of the SEC's evaluation. In attendance were the members of the SEC and other GRC officials. During the presentation, I provided the SEC with my independent judgment relative to the findings and asked several questions regarding the information presented. A follow-up meeting was held on July 31, 2009, to further discuss the SEC's findings. This selection decision resulted from those two meetings.

In review of the evaluation findings, I was in agreement with the findings as presented by Source Evaluation Committee. I understand the process used to arrive at the final findings and take no exception to the actions of the SEC. I further acknowledge the SEC approach which did not indicate a strength or weakness when an offeror was deemed to merely have met the requirements.

In discussing the findings in more detail, under Technical Capability I note the SEC's evaluation indicating that both AP and MTI offered solid and comparable proposals in the Technical Capability Factor as both received a rating of "good." I also agreed that both companies are capable of performing the work required by the GPSC contract. I note that limited strengths and weaknesses were identified with each offeror. I queried the SEC concerning the weaknesses of both firms. After a detailed discussion with the SEC, I did not consider these weaknesses as significant discriminators in my selection decision.

I note that the offerors received the same adjectival rating in Sample Tasks, Management Approach, Phase-in and Safety and Health. However, I note that the SEC's findings indicated that MTI offered a slightly stronger proposal in the Key Personnel and Staffing Plan subfactor. AP was rated as "good" while MTI was rated as "very good" based on the experience of the identified program manager. The SEC found, and I agreed, that the proposed MTI program manager would bring a wealth of directly applicable management and technical capabilities to the GPSC contract. The proposed individual worked extensively on the current Center CROME contract and, therefore, has direct technical experience working on high-pressure vessel systems. He also boasts experience at managing large NASA contracts both at NASA GRC and other NASA Centers. I agreed with the SEC's finding that this combination of direct technical and management experience on large NASA contracts involving the same or similar work will greatly enhance the possibility of MTI successfully performing the requirements of the GPSC contract.

I next queried the SEC on the Key Personnel associated with the AP Solutions. The SEC and I concurred that the Key Personnel proposed by AP Solutions met the GPSC RFP requirements and would do an acceptable job on the contract. However, the SEC and I also agreed that the proposed MTI program manager would provide qualitatively more value to the contract for the reasons stated above. Based on the SEC's findings, our discussion, and my independent analysis, I found this subfactor to be a key discriminator in my selection decision.

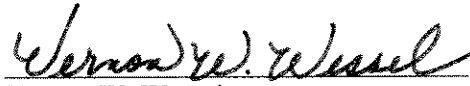
Next, I considered the ratings and evaluation of the two proposals in the Past Performance Factor. I note that MTI received a rating of a Very High Level of Confidence in this area while AP received a Moderate

Level of Confidence. I note that MTI had two significant strengths and no weaknesses while AP had two strengths, a weakness, and a neutral finding. I agree with the SEC's findings that AP demonstrated excellent performance on its past contracts; however this work was not directly applicable to the requirements of the GPSC contract. I also agreed with the SEC's finding of strength for the offeror's proposed subcontractor (Gilcrest Electric and Supply Co.) based on its relevant experience with cryogenic systems. I agreed with these two findings and noted that I was particularly impressed with Gilcrest's applicable experience from both a technical and management standpoint. I noted that the GPSC involves work that demands a heightened commitment to safety, complex contract management, and a firm understanding of the requirements associated with inspecting and certifying high pressure systems as a prime Government contractor. I concurred with the SEC's awarding of two significant strengths and found MTI's exceptional, and directly applicable, past performance in these areas to be of significant qualitative value and a key discriminator in my selection decision.

In the Cost Factor, I note that MTI's proposed costs were slightly lower than AP's proposed costs. A probable cost review did not make any adjustments or alter the AP proposed costs. I understand that there was a high level of confidence that both offerors could perform at or near the proposed amount. In accessing overall risk along with the proposed costs, I must acknowledge with my own independent judgment, that MTI's direct understanding of the program and related costs, provides me with a slightly higher confidence that that the effort can be performed at the proposed costs. I therefore have determined that MTI has a slight advantage in this area.

In summary, the SEC's findings and my independent analysis conclude that MTI's proposal was qualitatively slightly stronger in the Technical Capability Factor, stronger in the Past Performance Factor, and offered the lower probable cost to the Government than the AP proposal.

Therefore, in accordance with the RFP requirements and acknowledging the relative importance of the evaluation criteria as stated earlier, I find that Mainthia Technologies, Inc. provided the best solution to the RFP and is hereby selected to perform the requirements of the Glenn Pressure Systems Certification Contract.

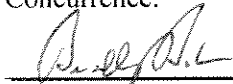


Vernon W. Wessel

Source Selection Authority

8/20/09
Date

Concurrence:



Bradley J. Baker, Procurement Officer

8/19/09
Date